

Sample Slab Update #7 – October 2015

The newsletter for sample slab collectors

PCGS Begins Registry Set for YN Treasure Hunt Slabs

As usual, at the September Long Beach Expo PCGS supplied the children's Treasure Hunt trivia activity with custom slabs to use as prizes. This time, however, PCGS began an online registry set only for the Treasure Hunt slabs. With the promise of more slabs to come and the opportunity to compete in a PCGS registry, the children were even less willing than usual to part with their treasures. Four slabs with America the Beautiful quarters appeared on eBay in early October and each sold for \$90 - \$100. In addition to the quarters, a few children received half dollar samples. None have been auctioned so far.

In addition to their reliability, this kind of innovative marketing is one of the reasons that PCGS remains the first choice of American coin collectors.



PCGS Plans Sample Slab Display for January FUN show

PCGS, the most prolific issuer of sample slabs, plans a display on the subject for the January 2016 Florida United Numismatists (FUN) show and the February 2016 Long Beach Expo. A manager from Collector's Universe, the parent company of PCGS, purchased a book from me in early October, saying he planned to put the book in the display and to use it for research. I do not know the size or form of the planned exhibit. I do know, however, that some advanced PCGS collectors plan to loan their samples.

Book News

The book officially debuted September 17. Sales are good online, mostly from SampleSlabBook.com with a few from eBay. I even filled some small wholesale orders. I hoped that readers would email me with unlisted varieties and this hope has come true. Dozens of new varieties and photos appeared in my mailbox. If I ever make a second edition, it may need to be two volumes. Special thanks go to Burton Strauss III, who spent a good part of his Labor Day weekend carefully cataloging his advanced collection according to the book's system and giving me extensive information on unlisted types.

A few eBay sellers and Web forum posters have begun using the [Sample Slabs](#) catalog numbers in their sales and discussion.

Market notes

Prices for common samples rose in the past few months. The recent attention paid to samples is bringing new collectors into the market. Understandably, these new collectors begin their collections with the lower cost and more common pieces. This trend could lead to higher prices for scarcer and more desirable samples later as some of the new entrants slowly move to more serious collecting.

My favorite days of the year are the days I spend at the three-times-per-year Long Beach Expo. It is better than Christmas. Why? Because on Christmas I buy presents for other people and at Long Beach I get to buy presents for myself. At this show on September 17, I picked up a unique 2015 Carson City Coin Show sample with a 1998 Robert Kennedy commemorative silver dollar from Jim Cauley of Errors and More. The Carson City show promoters had a wide variety of show samples made, many one-of-a-kind. As I mentioned to Sample Slab Update readers, Mike Kittle had more than a hundred slabs for sale, and I was happy to get several, including inexpensive but uncommon Coinland and NTC samples.

Also bringing me closer to my goal of owning one sample from every grader, a friend at a local coin club searched his junk drawer and found an obscure SGS sample for me (SGS-001-1-1). Although neither impressive nor expensive, this sample is a rarity from a seldom-seen service.



When I wrote [Sample Slabs](#) only a few months ago, I knew of only one gold coin sample slab. In addition to the Liberty Coin Service Mexico 2 pesos I described in the last Sample Slab Update, three more recently came

to light, bringing the total to five. Mike Kittle had in his inventory a “Compliments of UCB” Mexico 1945 2 pesos identical to mine (NGC-Mp2-9-1). EBay recently hosted auctions for two gold 20 francs in PCGS 4th generation promotional slabs for the True Wealth Alliance, which appears to be an investment club or service. I did not get the exact value or date of the France 20 francs (easy to miss without “Sample” in the auction title), but it sold for about melt value. A better-listed Switzerland 1935 20 francs earned \$292.77 on September 1.

The performance of three scarce NGC mint state war nickels (NGC-005-3-1) showed the importance of careful timing and effective listing in eBay sales. The seller put three slabs for sale in separate auctions with blurry photos and ending times around 1 pm on a Friday. I refrained from bidding because a friend who collects both samples and Jefferson nickels wanted at least one. The poor listings and oversupply led to shockingly low prices of just \$34.33 per coin for slabs that catalog for \$130 each.

An ICG sample with a 1936 Buffalo nickel (ICG-005-1-2) set a new record for an ICG slab on eBay, earning \$63 on 10/4/15. Although \$63 is not a large amount of money, I was happy to see collectors realize the scarcity of slabs outside of the Big Two.

Another grading service record was broken when a PCGS Currency two dollar 2003A note (PCGS Currency-200-2-1) sold for \$89.50 as a Buy It Now on October 2. Why did this sell for so much more than the \$25 catalog value? This one had an unusual 68PPQ grade. As comparison, the same seller sold 66PPQ samples of the same type on the same day for \$19.50 and \$39.50.

New [Downloads](#)

PCGS sample collector Bob Paul, whom I recently had the privilege of meeting in person, allowed me to post his extensive [article on ANACS certificates](#) at SampleSlabBook.com. Many Sample Slab Update readers are interested in the history of slabs and certificates, and I recommend you read his work.

The sampleslabs.com type numbers were our hobby’s standard classification system since 2003 and will probably always be in use to some extent. For your convenience, I made a [cross-reference](#) between Cameron Kiefer’s sampleslabs.com type numbers and the catalog numbers in [Sample Slabs](#).

Buying and Selling

Feel free to send buy and sell offers to include in the next newsletter. Maybe another SSU reader wants to buy your samples, or has the ones you need. No charge for the listings, of course.

Some of the slabs from the [fixed price sale](#) are still available. I am also interested in buying, especially from minor grading services.

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